

REMARKS

Claims 1-99 are canceled. Claims 102-104 and 108-110 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 100, 101, 105-107, and 111 have been amended. Claims 100, 101, 105-107, and 111 are pending in this application.

Claims 100 and 106 are rejected for obviousness over US Patent 5724993 ("Dunfee") in view of Huber, already of record in this application. The applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Rejection of a claim for obviousness over a combination of references requires, *prima facie*, a suggestion to combine the references, a reasonable expectation of success, and the inclusion of all elements of the rejected claim in the combination. See MPEP 2143, et seq.

The claims are now limited to an inflatable thermal blanket with a planar hose card having an aperture aligned with the inlet port of the inflatable thermal blanket.

Dunfee is directed to an inflatable spinal traction device in which the inflatable bladders 50 are formed of a flexible material such as latex. The bladders 50 are inflated by means including a removable pumping bulb 62 operating through an access port 66 and a built-in pump 65. Dunfee also mentions use of a hose connected to the compressed air brake system of a truck to inflate the bladders. However, in this latter instance, Dunfee teaches that the hose is connected to the bladders by means of a device such as a luer lock fitting. A luer fitting is an extended tip such as is found on the end of a syringe, which suggests that the bladders have a corresponding fitting like that on the end of a hypodermic needle.

Huber describes a reversible check valve connected between two pipes B that permits fluid to flow in one direction only. The handle 18 rotates the valve body A so as to position the valve central chamber C for operation in one direction or another with respect to the direction of fluid flow through the pipes.

In the Office Action, the contention is that motivation to combine Huber's valve with Dunfee's inflatable traction device is "to prevent over inflation." However, Huber's valve responds only to the direction of fluid flow, not to the pressure of the fluid. There is no explanation, in either reference or in the Office Action, of how Huber's check valve might respond to a maximum rated pressure of air moving in a single direction to prevent over inflation of Dunfee's bladders. If Huber's valve were installed in one direction to permit inflation of Dunfee's bladders, the flap 15 would not close or seat in response to

over inflation because the flow of inflating air would be unidirectional, and would keep the flap 15 open, even to the point of “over inflation” and, indeed, bursting of the bladders.

Further, Huber’s valve is for connecting two pipes and permitting fluid to flow in one direction only between the pipes. Dunfee’s inflating means do not operate on two pipes, and there is no description in the Office Action as to how Huber’s unidirectional check valve would be adapted to interface with Dunfee’s inflation bladders. In other words, there is no reasonable expectation that the combination of Dunfee with Huber would be successful.

Further, the proposed combination does not include “an inflatable thermal blanket” or “at least one planar hose card attached to the inflatable thermal blanket, the planar hose card including an aperture aligned with an inlet port for receiving and supporting the end of the air hose when the end is coupled with the inlet port.” The combination also omits “a moveable hinge lever connected to the flap which moves from a first position away from the end to a second position against the end in response to the end being coupled with the aperture and the inlet port.” Huber’s operating handle 18 only swivels the valve body A and evidently is operated manually, not in response to coupling a hose end to a hose card aperture and an inlet port.

Accordingly, the rejection of claims 100 and 106 for obviousness should be withdrawn.

Claims 101, 105, 107, and 111 are rejected for obviousness over Dunfee, in view of Huber, and further in view of Paidosh, also of record in this application. That rejection is respectfully traversed for the reasons given above, and for the following additional reasons.

The magnets recited in these claims cooperate to maintain the flap in a closed position. There is no motivation in either Dunfee or Huber to use magnets for this purpose. Dunfee alludes to use of a check valve that closes in response to a pressure limit. Huber specifically limits maintaining the flap 15 closed in response to the force of gravity acting on the counterweight 21. Paidosh specifies a simplification to known magnetic latches that remain closed against wind gusts. Paidosh claims that magnetic latches are superior, but without any suggestion as to what they are “superior” to. Accordingly, there is no motivation to combine these references in the manner suggested in the Office Action.

Further, the Office Action provides no reasonable expectation that the proposed combination would be successful.

Finally, in the rejected claims, engagement of the magnets is in response to or caused by decoupling the end of the air hose from the hose card aperture and the inlet port. Since none of the cited references includes a hose card with an aperture, the recited limitation is absent from the proposed combination.

Accordingly, the rejection of claims 101, 105, 107, and 111 for obviousness should be withdrawn.

For the reasons given in this paper, 100, 101, 105-107, and 111 are patentably distinguishable from the references of record, early notice of which is earnestly solicited.

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